

THE COURIER

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William Berry Lapham: Local Historian and Genealogist

by Stanley Russell Howe

William Berry Lapham (1828-1894) was one of the most prolific compilers of local history and genealogy that Maine produced during the latter half of the 19th century. Not only did he complete five local histories of Oxford County towns, but he also assembled some twenty-five genealogical works. In addition, he led an active life as a soldier, physician, postmaster, local official, state legislator, editor and social reformer.

Born in Greenwood, Maine, 27 August 1828, where his family was temporarily residing, he moved to nearby Bethel when he was only a few months old. Here he spent his formative years. He later recalled some of these memories in his *History of Bethel* in 1891: "All of my early associations are with Bethel and her people. It was there that I attended the common school and the academy, and the school house still standing, where I first attended, is the same in which I first tried to teach. I have been familiar with Bethel for more than half its years. I remember the days of lumbering stage-coaches, and mails only once a week, of the hard times for farmers for want of a near market, of the great scarcity of money, and of the enforced economy in household expenditures. I have witnessed all the great changes brought about by the introduction of railways, the telegraph and the telephone, and the application of steam power for propelling machinery. I was acquainted with some of the early settlers,

and when a boy, I heard from the lips of Nathaniel Segar, the story of the captivity. Of the second generation, I was acquainted with most of them, in all parts of the town....My interest in the dear old town is unabated, for whatever changes may have taken place in population, the river, the crystal brooks, the broad intervals, the hills and mountains and all the varied scenery remain the same, and after the lapse of all these years can be called in review at will."

During his youth, according to his own account, he worked on various farms, and managed to graduate from Gould Academy and enter Colby University (now College) in 1851. His comment on his early educational opportunities was that they were "limited." Lapham did not remain to graduate, but later was awarded an honorary degree from Colby in 1874.

After leaving college, he read medicine with Dr. Almon Twitchell on Church Street in Bethel, attended lectures at the Maine Medical School, and at Dartmouth College, and finished his medical education in New York in 1856.

Returning to Bryant Pond following completion of his M.D. degree, he began his medical practice at Bryant Pond in the town of Woodstock, where he also served as postmaster, school official, and tax collector. He was a charter member of the Jefferson Lodge of Masons and

District Deputy Grand Master of the 16th Masonic District; he also served two terms in the 18th District as well.

When the Civil War began in 1861, he volunteered and was given permission to recruit a company in short order. The Federal Government, believing in Lapham's words, "it had all
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Elsewhere in this issue is the list of all who generously contributed to this year's annual fund campaign. We had a record 407 donors this year. I wish to add my thanks to all who made a gift this year. I also want to thank and congratulate members of the Annual Fund Committee headed by John Head for their fine work in helping to keep the Society on sound financial footing. The Annual Fund provides essential support for programming and operations. On behalf of a grateful Society, thanks to everyone who helped in 2003.

Arlan R. Jodrey

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(William Berry Lapham, continued from page 1)

the men needed to subdue the rebellion” disbanded the company as was the case with several others raised during this period in Maine.

During the winter of 1861-62, he assisted with hospitals in Augusta, and regiments without medical staff.

Finally in 1862, he enlisted as a private in the 23rd Maine Regiment, receiving promotion to Commissary Sergeant, then to Second and subsequently to First Lieutenant of Company F.

Following service with the 23rd, he aided in recruiting the 7th Maine Battery. Eventually he was mustered into the service as Senior First Lieutenant. He served with this battery during the remainder of the war, participating in several of the battles of the Army of the Potomac to the surrender of the Confederate armies and the close of the war in 1865.

With the cessation of hostilities, Lapham was appointed to the rank of Assistant Quartermaster. He was then ordered to duty in Vermont, and mustered out on 30 October 1865 as a Brevet Major.

After being released from the Army, he returned to Bryant Pond to resume his medical practice. Here he became the Worthy Chief of the Lodge of Good Templars and as a result became a strong temperance advocate.

At this time, he also entered the political arena, becoming a member of the Maine House of Representatives in 1867. The following year he received appointment to the Board of Trustees of the Maine Insane Hospital, serving in that capacity for six years, the last four as president of the Board.

During this period, he assumed command of the Grand Army of the Republic Post (G.A.R.) in Bryant Pond.

Since he was spending so much time in Augusta, he decided to move there in June 1871. He soon became involved in positions in that city. In 1872, he assumed the post of general and news editor of the *Maine Farmer*, a position once held by his former teacher at Gould Academy, Dr. N. T. True. Later he was agricultural editor of the publication.

Lapham was elected as commander of the Seth William, G.A.R. post in Augusta. He also took on the responsibilities as medical director for the G.A.R. Department of Maine.

Becoming intensely interested in genealogy, Lapham became a member of the Maine Historical Society, the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, the Prince Society, an honorary member of the Weymouth, Massachusetts Historical Society and a corresponding member of the Royal Society of Great Britain.

In Augusta, he became a member of the Maine Press Association, the Society for the Preservation of Cruelty to Animals, and the secretary and a director of the library of that city.

In 1866, he married Cynthia Perham of Woodstock. They had three daughters.

It was at this point of his life (in his early forties) that he began his career as a writer and editor while completing a study of the Lapham family in 1873. Besides his work for the *Maine Farmer*, he founded in 1875 *The Maine Genealogical and Biographer*, a quarterly which lasted for three years.

This experience apparently whetted his appetite for

research in local and family history. During this period, he published genealogies of the Bisbee, Ricker, Tilden, and Chase families.

Dr. Lapham's first town history, *History of Woodstock*, appeared in 1882. It was soon followed by *History of Paris* (which he co-authored with Silas Maxim), *History of Norway*, (1886), *History of Rumford* (1890), and *History of Bethel* (1891). Concurrently, he also completed genealogical studies of the Bradbury, Knox, Hazelton, Clason, and Hill families as well as a sketch of Hallowell and a volume of war memoirs, *Recollection of the War of the Rebellion* (1892). He died in Togus Veterans Home of acute diabetes on 22 February 1894 at the age of sixty-five while at work on a history of Kittery. He was buried in Lakeside Cemetery in Bryant Pond.

At his funeral, Rev. H. S. Whitman said of him: "It was here that many of us came to know and love him. That strong, earnest, intense personality made a deep impression upon my young life, by the force of his positive convictions and aggressive earnestness, he soon became a leader of men. He threw his soul into all the life issues of the day and took a manly stand for what he believed to be the truth and the right. He had enemies to be sure. What man of force has not? An eminent United States Senator has said, 'A man who makes no enemies is never a positive force.' He took his position on questions as they came up, and was always ready to defend it with all his power. He was a strong, affectionate, generous man, a man of convictions and courage."

In May 1894, Charles E. Nash wrote of him in a talk before the Maine Historical Society: "In all of Dr. Lapham's investigations, he was painstaking, critical, and conscientious, insuring to his published work a remarkable degree of accuracy and corresponding rank as historical authority. He was a ready and fertile writer, commanding a style of composition that is delightfully simple and direct, and as little influenced by the play of fancy or imagination as the terse prescriptions which he penned for his patients in the days of his medical practice."

To place Dr. Lapham within the historical frame of reference in regard to the state of history in his day, it may be fruitful to examine briefly the context and tradition in which he worked.

The first historians in what is today the United States were the Puritans who saw history and wrote it as a "working out" of God's will upon human beings. In other words, theirs was a history that was highly theological and frequently contained numerous biblical references, analogies, and moral judgements reflecting the Puritan concept that they were God's "Chosen People" destined to establish in America the Christian ideal of the "City on the Hill."

These historians were succeeded by the so-called patrician historians, such as Francis Parkman, George Bancroft, and Henry Adams, men of learning and leisure, who wrote history from an elitist point of view and often highly nationalist in bias.

The rise of the professional historian came in the latter half of the 19th century with the breakdown of the classical curriculum and the emergence of the elective system. The rise of the Ph.D. degree also fostered this development.

In 1884, the American Historical Association was founded; its *Review* would appear in 1895. Also significant was the formation of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (1907); in 1964, it became the Organization of American Historians.

Historians associated with the founding of these two organizations were among those pioneering professional historians, who tried hard to apply the principles of science to human behavior, which is not always easy as *Homo sapiens* are not usually so predictable.

The current view of historical writing mandates that practitioners of the historical craft should write as interestingly and objectively as possible, supporting all viewpoints with a careful analysis of all available evidence while eliminating as much as practical all prejudice and preconceptions.

With this in mind, it is possible to consider the interest in local and regional history that began to flower in the latter half of the 19th century.

Most writers in this genre were in the tradition of the patrician historians. They were primarily clergymen, retired soldiers, doctors and professional people, who wrote with all the predilections of class viewpoint that one might anticipate from persons of that background. They appeared heavily influenced by the tenor of their times.

In some ways, these chroniclers of the past are a good study model for today's historians as they often mirrored their times in less self-conscious ways than the national historians, who tended to be more introspective.

The last twenty-five years of the 19th century brought a golden age in local history as the wounds of the Civil War began to heal and the national centenary celebration launched the colonial revival movement. During this era, the past came to be romanticized.

Anglo-Saxons began to search out their genealogical antecedents in response to the swelling number of immigrants to America. This tended to reassure those born in this nation of their superiority and special place in its founding while reminding the immigrants of their station in national life. Some of those who were native-born believed that the absorption of so many immigrants at once would dilute what they considered "Americanism." Industrial violence in the late 19th century epitomized by the Haymarket riot and other disruptive events lent momentum to the idea that foreigners were somehow alien to American values. The rise of the pledge of allegiance, the founding of both the Daughters and Sons of the American Revolution, and other patriotic movements and practices were among the responses by some who were intent on making certain all foreigners arriving on these shores would become 100% American.

The emphasis on native-born heredity and status came to be important to some elements of the U.S. population since America had inherited no European aristocracy. Because of this perceived deficiency, one had to be created in the opinion of some American citizens.

It was into that atmosphere that local historians of Lapham's era did their research and wrote their histories.

Various generalizations may apply to most of the writing in this genre. Clio's servants of the era often relied on hearsay evidence for their historical compositions, wary and even contemptuous of the rules of evidence and verification. They often plagiarized freely from other sources and based their work on a narrow base of references. It was not uncommon for them to change the text of a document that did not fit their purposes. In a number of cases, they possessed and advocated ideas of racial superiority and inferiority, particularly toward Indians and other minorities. In many instances, they focused on a narrow view of history, chiefly political in emphasis thereby neglecting social, intellectual and economic aspects of the historical process. They were usually primarily collectors of information accompanied by little or no analysis. These historians of Lapham's time frequently introduced personal opinions and perspectives into the text, often without qualifying remarks. Many of these historians were motivated by family pride or a desire to achieve some form of immortality. Not infrequently they infused their historical writing with the idea that a good Christian life based on sobriety and self-discipline would lead to the best of lives and become the surest guarantee of success. Finally, these historians commonly exaggerated the qualities of settings and the achievements of individuals. The use of superlatives and the instances of local pride were often excessive.

What then can we learn about Lapham's work in relation to the observations listed above?

On the question of relying on personal recollections, impressions as well as hearsay evidence, Lapham, for example, on page 435 of his Bethel history observed that wolves were prevalent based on his personal recollection of sixty years before. He also recalls numerous legends and we have only his work as our source in many cases.

When discussing individuals such as Israel Kimball, Jr., Dr. Lapham wrote: "It is always a pleasure to speak of such a man as Israel Kimball, Jr., because pleasant things can be said of him without fear of adverse comment and without exposing the writer to the charge of favoritism. Such men are the salt of the earth, and the world is better that they have lived. He was honest, industrious, frugal, and thrifty. He had an abundance of charity, but he bestowed it with discrimination and judgement. He despised shams in whatever form they were presented. He excelled in everything he undertook.... His wife Sarah Webber Kimball was a most excellent woman, a model Christian mother, and an ornament to her sex." It appears clear also that Lapham admired him because Kimball reflected his position on the temperance issue.

Regarding a tendency to plagiarize, he had no qualms about quoting Dr. True's Bethel history extensively and often without attribution.

Concerning the limited sources question, Lapham must be found guilty. He relied mainly upon town records and personal recollections. There is no or little evidence of broad reading of newspapers, diaries, letters, and other documentary evidence to support his contentions.

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(William Berry Lapham, continued from page 5)

At least in one case, Lapham changed the text of a document. In his history of Rumford, Lapham altered Rev. Daniel Gould's *History* of 1826 when he incorporated it into his work.

Throughout his historical writing, one finds frequent reference to race that was so typical of that era. Moreover, Lapham often made value judgements in regard to Indians, referring to them as "treacherous and savage."

A good example of his personal views being evident in his historical writing appears in the account he composed regarding Consider Cole in his Bethel history:

"Consider Cole was a Greenwood man, but he was often at Bethel Hill, and when there, provided he had the means to gratify his insatiable appetite for drink, he was sure to become intoxicated. On one occasion he crept into the school house which stood near Robertson's shop [now the site of the Bethel House on Main Street], intending to spend the night there. It was a bitter cold night, and seeing him enter I followed him. He was camped upon the floor, and when I entered, he lifted his head, and resting upon his hand, his elbow on the floor, he peered into my face and said, 'Are you the school committee? If you be, won't you have glass set in the windows to keep out the wind.' I took him to the tavern where he obtained his drink, and by a little coaxing and a few threats of prosecution, induced the landlord to take care of him for the night. At another time, I with another, found him late at night in a horse shed, upon the ground, in a drunk stupor. It was a bitter night and glittering stars looked coldly down upon the snow-clad earth. We raised him up, and each taking an arm, walked him off toward warmer quarters. As we were going along, he turned upon me, and having some idea where he might be going or ought to go, with a drunken leer, he enquired, 'Be you the devil?' Our interference on this occasion doubtless saved his life for he could not have outlived that frigid night. Consider enlisted and went to the war and never returned, which was, perhaps, just as well. He could not resist an appetite long indulged and which was hereditary. His father, lying before an open fire in a drunken sleep, was roasted alive, and the whole family were slaves to the intoxicating cup. Consider and his brother did not marry, and the family has become extinct." The bias is so obvious here that one can perhaps hear Lapham saying in regard to this Cole family, "Hooray! The problem is over since the family no longer exists."

Lapham's views on the temperance issue are also evident in a letter he wrote from Augusta on 20 July 1890 to the *Oxford Advertiser* for 5 August 1890. In discussing the town of his birth, he wrote: "Greenwood City had an unsavory reputation for many years in the olden time, when rum was sold in quantities, and there were frequent gatherings of the yeomanry round about, who indulged in wrestling, pitching quoits, horse racing, and sometimes in fighting."

In a series of articles in the *Oxford Advertiser* in 1887, Lapham, using a pen name "Index" recorded information on

the history of his birthplace. While doing so, he did not miss an opportunity to elaborate more fully on the growing popularity of rum in Locke Mills, a village in the town of Greenwood: "A large trade was soon carried on and a hogshead would not supply the weekly demand. The business was too good for one man to have a monopoly long and soon another store was opened of the same character. Then a tavern did a remunerative business in dealing out the poison that 'stole men's brains' for a number of years." In summary, Lapham wrote that "the reign of rum in Locke's [the name was later shortened to Locke Mills] Mills covered a period of about twelve years and during that time did a great amount of harm." He cited mortgages issued during this period and never paid, adding, "Not only was the money wasted by being exchanged for rum but valuable time was lost in loafing about the village and under the influence of liquor men were often persuaded to buy things that they did not need; in this way the account was run up and then it must be secured." In conclusion, he noted that "enlightened public sentiment has driven the [liquor] business from the rural towns into the dark corners of the cities and large villages, where this and kindred crimes ever have and probably ever will be committed."

Lapham was very definitely moved by family considerations and a desire for immortality. His sketch of his life in his Woodstock history is detailed. He also wrote the volume on his role in the Civil War expressly for his progeny to be certain that they would not forget his service to the Union cause.

In his descriptions of places, Dr. Lapham was effusive in his praise of the local color. He reflected enormous pride in his discussion of his early years in Bethel, but was not so approving of the town of his birth, believing that the people of his birthplace (Greenwood) were not as temperate as he might expect them to be.

Some of Lapham's historical writing was also performed for monetary gain. His Rumford history was most notably assembled for money. As a result, it is perhaps the weakest of his five major histories since he appears to have little personal connection with the town. All of his publications netted him some income, but he struggled financially most of his life.

Despite all these shortcomings, Lapham's histories are particularly strong in their notation of geographic features as well as the detailed descriptions of local flora and fauna. In this role, he clearly understood particular aspects of the historical craft when he quoted Edmund Burke to declare that writing of the past helps "to attend to the neglected and to remember the forgotten."

In summation, Lapham's histories and genealogies are still consulted to this day because he recorded so much information that would otherwise have been lost. He was well aware of John Quincy Adams' observation that "posterity delights in details." Researchers in Maine history are all the richer for his labors.

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Over \$20,000 was raised from a record 407 donors during the 2003 Annual Fund Campaign. Much appreciation is expressed to all of the following for their generosity in helping to support the Society's programming and operations.

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 Anonymous; *in memory of Athena Gabriele Tsakiridis*
 Oscar Annis, Bethel; *in memory of Louise Annis*
 Jean C. Anton, Greenwood, ME; *in memory of Stephanie Anton*
 Roberta Arbree, Randolph, NH
 Mary Ann Ashcraft, Westminster, MD
 James and Linda Auman, Warren, NJ
 Carolyn S. Austin, Bennington, VT; *in memory of Maynard Austin*
 Nancy Babcock, Newry, ME
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 Allen and Mary Alice Bancroft, Paris, ME
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 Al and Lee Barth, Bethel
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 Dulcie C. Bean, Key West, FL; *in memory of John Albert Bean*
 Evelyn Bean, Bryant Pond, ME
 Robert Blake, Bethel
 Carla Brown Beddo, Vacaville, CA; *in memory of Barbara Eva Brown Barone*
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 Doris Brown, Bethel
 Jeff Brown, East Longmeadow, MA
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 Musa S. Brown, Bethel; *in memory of Edwin Brown*
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Diary of William S. Hastings

(continued from the last issue)



1940-July 1 [no entry] July 2 [no entry] July 3, Cloudy. Surveyed 3 hrs. for Edwards. \$2.90 due. 3 ½ hrs. for Eddie Cross. Paid \$3.30. Night watchman [for the night before the 4th] for Town of Bethel, \$3.50 due. July 4, Rain. Worked on cellar. July 5, Worked on cellar. July 6, Clear, hot. Haying Home field. July 7, Clear & hot. Haying. Crow Piece. Barbara gone visiting Evelyn [Tamminen, her aunt]. July 8, Clear & hot. Same. July 9, Cloudy. Hayed most all day. July 10, Clear, cool. Haying Ephaim piece. July 11, Cloudy. Hoed spuds all day. July 12, Rain a.m., clearing p.m. Wired 3 ½ hrs. for John Irvine. Norway in p.m. Back is coming good. July 13, Clear, warm. Wiring for Irvine. July 14, Clear & warm. Greenwood school reunion. I cruised in Lots 19 & 20 R 8 on Moose Bog. Found Valentine's lost corners. July 15, Haying. July 16, Haying. Wired 3 ½ hrs. for John Irvine. July 17, Clear. Wired 3 hrs. July 18, Clear & hot. Started spraying. Using tractor on sprayer. July 19, Clear & hot. Hayed all day. Hauling to [Sherman] Newton's barn. Called on Hal Hastings in eve. [Broad St. summer resident and first cousin to his father George K. Hastings]. July 20, Cloudy. Worked on cellar in a.m. Sprayed in p.m. Rehearsal at night. July 21, Cloudy. Dad & our family went to Fryeburg & called on Cousin Alice Hastings [sister of Edward]. She is 88. Also called on Mary [Hastings] & [her husband] Ellis McKeen at Conway [Edward's daughter and husband]. July 22, Cloudy, showers. Load of boards planed at Mann's [mill]. Made a window frame in late p.m. Built state in Grange hall in eve. Uncle John [Fifield] got hurt on bridge job. July 23, Clear, hot. Sprayed & hayed. July 24, Cloudy. Worked on brooder cellar a.m. P.M. Hayed. July 25, Cloudy. Ditto. Finished cement floor under brooder house. July 26, Showers in morning, cleared, hot. Carpentering in a.m. Hayed & sprayed in p.m. Put vine lifters on tractor. Fireworks in p.m. 1000 cars there. July 27, Cloudy & showers. F. & G. Field Day. I sprayed in a.m. Sold tickets in p.m. 7 books in all. Home at 1 a.m. July 28, Clear & HOT! I pulled Newt's barn together in a.m. Hayed in p.m. Greenwood in very late p.m. July 29, Cloudy. Haying. Sprayed for John. July 30, Showers. Haying. July 31, Clear, cool. Haying. August 1, Showery. Fixed Newton's barn rafter, \$1.50 charge. Mowed on Henry Piece. Cleaned chimney for Dutton. Worked on brooder cellar until 10:30 p.m. August 2, Clear, warm. Hayed in a.m. P.M. to Norway for treatment. Back is coming fine. August 3, Clear, hot. Haying nearly done. August 4, Clear & hot. Chained lines for Lapham in "Ireland." Got hay. Bob's folks went to Umbagog. August 5 [no entry] August 6, Clear & hot. Hayed and sprayed. August 7, Clear, cool. Sprayed. Finished haying. August 8, Clear, hot. Sprayed. P.M. whole family went to Umbagog camping on Tyler Cove. Arrived at 6:30 & set up tent. August 9, Clear, warm. Went to Rapid River in a.m. P.M. around cove. Beds are hard. August 10, Clear & hot. Saw two deer from tent. B Brook Cove, Moll's Rock, Sturtevant Cove, Sunday Cove & home to camp. Shower in late p.m. August 11, Clear & hot. Rested in a.m. Home in p.m., arrived 4:30. Fine trip! August 12, Clear & hot. Repaired thresher. August 13, Cloudy, showers. Wired for Fred in p.m. August 14, Clear & hot. Wired for Fred. Threshed 850 lbs. of rye, for seed. Soldered Fred's lavatory in eve. August 15, Clear & hot. Surveyed 4 hrs. for Town of Bethel on Summer St. Clarence Bennett's

garage burned. Paid for mixer, \$9.50. August 16, Clear, hot. Sprayed a.m. Some early blight. P.M. Norway for treatment. August 17, Clear & HOT. Mowed 5 ½ A oats & loaded 2 loads. Greenwood after 4 p.m. August 19, Rain. County Commissioner hearing on Summer St.—Fred Davis, Rumford, Harry Brown, Waterford & Mr. Eastman, Fryeburg. They took my survey as right. Threshed 2 loads in p.m. August 20, Clear & cool. Cloud burst last eve. has washed the roads & filled Coburn cellar with mud. Marked boundaries at Summer St., Bethel. August 21, Clear & cold, windy. Wired 7 hrs. for John Irvine. Crew threshing. August 22, Clear & warm. Wired 7 hrs. for John Irvine. Crew finished 1 piece of oats. August 23, Rain. Wiring 7 hours. August 24, Cold, windy. Wired 6 ½ hrs. for John Irvine. Nearly done. August 25, Cold, windy. Tinkered in a.m. Greenwood in p.m. August 26, Cool. Threshed 5 ½ loads in p.m. August 27, Clear, cool. Finished threshing our oats. August 28, Clear, hot. Surveyed for 8 hrs. for Asa Howard in L27R9, Bethel. August 29, Clear & hot. Surveyed 8 hrs. for Charles Valentine in L21R8, Bethel. August 30, Cloudy, mist. Wired 2 hrs. for John Irvine. Norway in p.m. Back was out a little. August 31, Rain. Dug bindweed in a.m. Wired 5 hrs. for John Irvine. Nearly done. September 1, Rain. Left at 10:30 a.m. for Old Orchard where we had overnight cabin with Grover's family. Clear p.m. We painted the town [at the amusement center]. September 2, Rain a.m., clear p.m. Did the rounds again. Home at 8:30. Nice trip. Back is out a little. September 3, Carpenter work in a.m. Norway in p.m. Spuds are \$1 per bu. retail. Bro[t sic] home new digger, Int'l Harvester Co., 7 foot with 26" in bed, \$152. September 4, Clear & cool. Tinkered ensilage cutter a.m. Cut in 6 or 8 loads clover & molasses in p.m.

(to be continued in the next issue)



William S. Hastings in the 1920s

Notes Regarding Bethel, Maine
by William A. Valentine
(continued from the last issue)



Our Boat on the Creek

When I was about five years old, some of the boarders at the old home were a Captain Wayland and his family from Salem, Mass. I think he spent his winters fishing on the Grand Banks. That summer he told us boys if one of us came to visit him in Salem he would give us a boat. The next winter I was on a visit to my grandparents with Mother and we stopped in Salem to visit Uncle Elmer Valentine, an older brother of my grandfather, and we also stopped to see the Waylands. True to the promise he sent us a dory the next summer but I imagine it was one that had passed its usefulness on the fishing schooners and he probably got it for little or nothing. It came to us \$7 freight collect.

For some years we kept it in the creek below the bridge and then would go down through the alders to the open pond below. Other years we had it on the Pork Barrel pond. It was a very safe and seaworthy craft and Charles and I learned something about handling a boat with it.

At that time, there was a French family named Cushing lived in what was afterward the Stowell Place and they always had one or more boats there.

One day some other boys as well as the two Cushing boys came to see us and about seven of us got into the boat and had picked up sticks to supplement the two paddles in the boat and went down the long pond in style with a six oar crew and seventh steering with a piece of hop pole.

We finally gave the boat to old Uncle Willey who lived in a house above the Stowell place in 1884 and it was still in existence in 1887.

In 1886, Father built a slightly smaller copy of it, but it was nearly as safe or seaworthy as the original boat. We had it in the river for three seasons and then it was out behind the barn for four years and then Dana Grover and I put it in the river and took it up to West Bethel in 1892. They still had it in 1893, but I do not know what finally became of it. I was spilled out of it once, but luckily in shallow water and some of the Grovers got spilled once. Usually we kept a bag of rocks weighing about 100 pounds in it for ballast.

(to be continued in the next issue)



MEMBER PROFILE

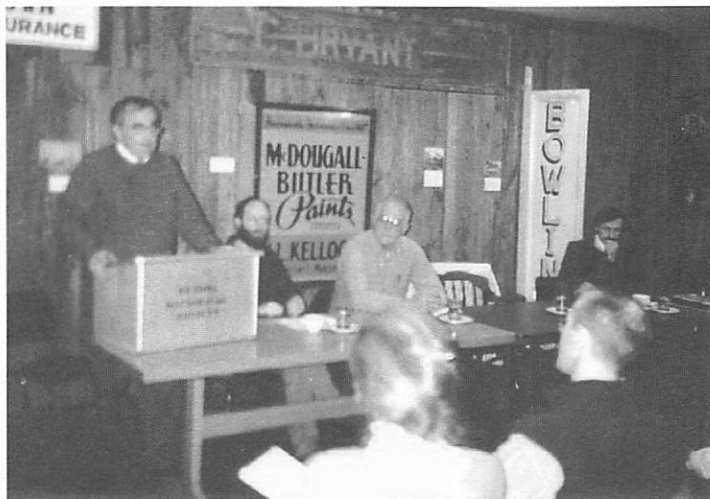
Annie Hastings

Annie Hastings was born in Mexico, Maine, the daughter of Colin and Lillian Decker MacKinnon. She attended local schools and graduated from Mexico High School in 1938. After graduation, she worked as a paper sorter at the Oxford Paper Company in Rumford before enrolling at the Rumford Community Hospital School of Nursing, where she graduated in 1944. Prior to her marriage to attorney Henry Hastings in 1948, she worked as a nurse at the Rumford Community Hospital. She and her husband adopted two children, Steve and Cindy. After her husband died in 1968, she returned to nursing, retiring in 1986. She has two grandchildren.

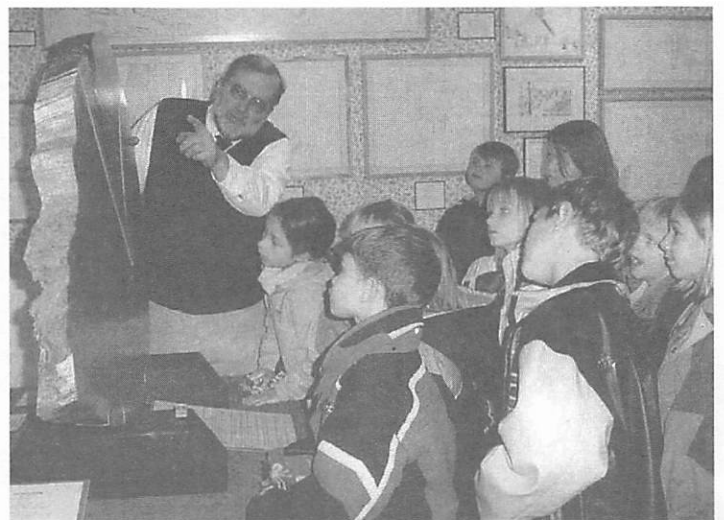
Very active in the community, she served on the Rumford Hospital Auxiliary, as a Sunday School teacher at the West Parish Congregational Church, as a scout leader, as a member of the Bethel Health Council and as Worthy Matron of Purity Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star.

A life member of the Society since 1977, she has provided food for Society special events and for the past several years, has been one of the "stalwarts" of the mailing group who assist with Society mailings. She rarely misses one of these sessions which occur throughout the year.

Her hobbies include reading, knitting and crafts.



Society President Arlan Jodrey, 2002 Tree Farmer of the Year, addresses the Society's "Wood and Woods" class this fall. Other participants in the panel include (left to right) Mike Wilson of the Northern Forest Center, Donald Feeney, Forester, and Jym St. Pierre of Restore the Northern Woods



Society Executive Director Stanley R. Howe explains the concept tree rings dating from the 18th century to the present in the "Wood and Woods" exhibit to Crescent Park School second graders. Photo courtesy of Brenda Wight.

Editor's Corner

An error in the salutation was made in the "translation" of Dr. Moses Mason's letter published on the cover of the last issue. It should read "My dear sister Mary Ann." The word "sister" was inadvertently omitted. This omission was brought to my attention by Norm Clanton while he worked to assemble and fold the fall issue. Much of Dr. Mason's letter is a challenge to read, but the word "sister" is clearly visible on the section we published despite the challenge of deciphering the Doctor's handwriting. I hope this omission did not cause too much confusion for readers.

SRH

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Our Readers Write

Lillian Fuller Rose of Portsmouth, NH: "I thoroughly enjoy your newsletter. It is an excellent publication. I also follow your activities in *The Bethel Citizen*. I lived in Bethel in my teens, and have many fond memories of my four years at Gould. It seems you are growing by leaps and bounds!"

In Memoriam

Died, 15 December 2003, Julia B. Brown, Life Member

Book Note

Neat & Tidy: Boxes and Their Contents Used in Early American Household by Nina Fletcher Little. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001. Pp. 204. Paper. \$19.95)

This book by the famed lecturer and author Nina Fletcher Little provides a valuable assemblage of information relating to the early American box. From this well-illustrated volume, one can learn much about boxes for general convenience, personal use, domestic purposes, and for special needs. Under each category, Ms. Little discusses carving, embellishment, inlay, gilding, and paints as well as uses from public to private purposes. Some unusual examples are cited in her study such as ones for miniatures and for lamps. This book will serve as an essential reference on its subject for years to come.

To order, please see page 12.

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Merrill Bittner, Newry
Wende Gray, Bethel
Nancy Noppa, Newry
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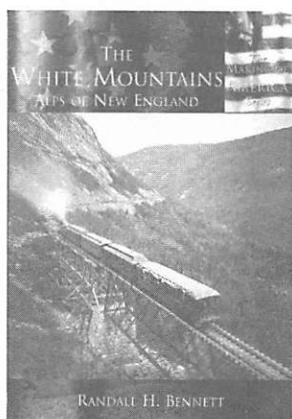
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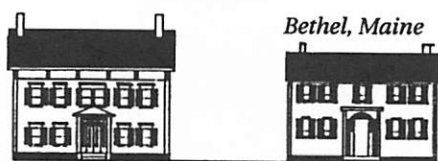
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